

CLAIMS

We claim:

5 1. With respect to a communication from a caller to a subscriber's directory number where the communication has been terminated to a voice mail system (VMS) serving the subscriber instead of the communication having been terminated to terminating equipment associated with the subscriber's directory number, a method for transferring the communication from the VMS so the VMS is no longer involved in the
10 communication, the method comprising:

 A. receiving a message indicating a release of the communication by the VMS, the message also indicating at least an action to be taken with respect to the communication; and

 B. directing that the action be taken with respect to the communication,
15 whereby the communication, which had been terminated to the VMS, is released from the VMS and is acted upon without further involvement of the VMS with the communication.

20 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the message comprises the subscriber's directory number and a different directory number;

 wherein the type of action comprises a transfer of the communication;

 wherein action B comprises directing the communication be transferred to the subscriber's directory number;

 and further comprising:

25 in response to directing the communication be transferred to the subscriber's directory number, receiving a query with respect to the communication; and

 in response to the query, causing the communication to be transferred to the different directory number.

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6. With respect to a communication from a caller to a subscriber's directory number where the communication has been terminated to a voice mail system (VMS) of the subscriber instead of the communication having been terminated to terminating equipment associated with the subscriber's directory number, a system for transferring the communication from the VMS so the VMS is no longer involved in the communication, the system comprising:

a service switching point (SSP) operative to receive a message indicating a release of the communication by the VMS, the message also indicating at least an action to be taken with respect to the communication, and the SSP also operative to provide the message to a service control point (SCP); and

the SCP operative, in response to receipt of the message from the SSP, to direct that the action be taken with respect to the communication,

whereby the communication, which had been terminated to the VMS, is released from the VMS and is acted upon without further involvement of the VMS with the communication.

7. The system of Claim 6, wherein the message comprises the subscriber's directory number and a different directory number;

wherein the action comprises a transfer of the communication;

wherein the SCP is also operative to direct that the communication be transferred to the subscriber's directory number as the action.

8. The system of Claim 7, wherein the SCP is further operative to direct the SSP to route the communication to the subscriber's directory number; and

wherein the SSP is operative to route the communication to the subscriber's directory number.

9. The system of Claim 8, wherein in response to the routing of the communication to the subscriber's directory number, the communication is first routed to an SSP serving the subscriber's directory number ("subscriber's SSP");

wherein the subscriber's SSP is operative, in response to routing of the communication, to make a query of the SCP with respect to the communication; and wherein the SCP, in response to the query, is operative to cause the communication to be transferred to the different directory number.

10. The system of Claim 9, wherein the SCP, in response to the query, is operative to cause the communication to be transferred to the different directory number by providing instructions to the subscriber's SSP to transfer the communication to the different directory number; and

wherein the subscriber's SSP is operative, in response to the instructions, to transfer the communication to the different directory number.

11. The system of Claim 10, wherein the instructions also comprise a request to generate a billing record with respect to the communication.

12. The system of Claim 6, wherein the message comprises a remote operations parameter including information indicating the action to be taken with respect to the communication.

13. The system of Claim 12, wherein the message comprises a GR-1129 message comprising the remote operations parameter.

14. With respect to a communication from a caller to a subscriber's directory number where the communication has been terminated to a voice mail system (VMS) serving the subscriber instead of the communication having been terminated to terminating equipment associated with the subscriber's directory number, a method for
5 acting on the communication so that the VMS is no longer involved with the communication, the method comprising:

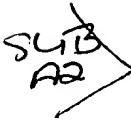
A. receiving an indication of action to be taken with respect to the communication; and

B. transmitting a message indicating a release of the communication, the
10 message indicating the action to be taken with respect to the communication,

whereby the communication, which had been terminated to the VMS, is released from the VMS and acted upon without further involvement of the VMS in the communication.

15 15. The method of Claim 14, wherein the action comprises an event allowing for the release of the communication.

16. The method of Claim 14, further comprising, in order to receive the indication of action to be taken with respect to the communication, providing the caller
20 or the communication with an option for exercise of the action to be taken with respect to the communication.

25  17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the action comprises an action other than receipt of a voice mail message from the caller ("an other action").

18. The method of Claim 14, wherein receiving an indication of the action comprises receiving the indication of the action from the caller or the communication.

22. With respect to a communication from a caller to a subscriber's directory number where the communication has been terminated to a voice mail system (VMS) serving the subscriber instead of the communication having been terminated to terminating equipment associated with the subscriber's directory number, a VMS that
5 acts on the communication so that the VMS is no longer involved with the communication, the VMS comprising:

a receiver operative to receive an indication of action to be taken with respect to the communication; and

a transmitter for transmitting a message indicating a release of the
10 communication, the message indicating the action to be taken with respect to the communication,

whereby the communication, which had been terminated to the VMS, is released from the VMS and acted upon without further involvement of the VMS with the communication.
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23. The VMS of Claim 22, wherein the action comprises an event allowing for the release of the communication from the VMS.

24. The VMS of Claim 22, further comprising:
a means for soliciting the indication of the action to be taken with respect to the communication.

5 25. The VMS of Claim 22, wherein the means for soliciting the indication of the action is operative to solicit the indication of the action from the caller or from the communication.

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10 26. The VMS of Claim 24, wherein the action comprises an action other ("an other action") than receipt of a voice mail message from the caller or the communication.

27. The VMS of Claim 22, wherein the message comprises the subscriber's directory number and a different directory number; and
wherein the action comprises a transfer of the communication.

15 28. The VMS of Claim 22, wherein the message comprises a remote operations parameter including information indicating the action to be taken with respect to the communication.

20 29. The VMS of Claim 28, wherein the message comprises a GR-1129 message comprising the remote operations parameter.